

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01
SAJ-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 NSC-05 ACDE-00
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FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1870

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MBFR VIENNA 0608

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: INFORMAL SESSION WITH EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES
OF DECEMBER 7, 1976

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN THE DECEMBER 7 INFORMAL SESSION OF THE VIENNA TALKS, THE ALLIES WERE REPRESENTED BY THE BELGIAN REP, UK REP AND US REP, AND THE EAST BY SOVIET REPS TARASOV AND SHUSTOV, CZECHOSLOVAK REP MEISNER, AND POLISH REP DABROWA. THE SESSION WAS LARGELY ON PREDICTED LINES.

2. EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES PUT CASE FOR REDUCTION BY EQUAL PERCENTAGES AND STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE WESTERN APPROACH TO REDUCTIONS OF ARMAMENTS. THEY SAID THE WESTERN POSITION ON PHASING WAS MOST VAGUE AS REGARDS WESTERN COMMITMENTS, WHILE DEMANDING MUCH FROM THE EAST. WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES CRITICIZED THE EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH FOR FOCUSING ON REDUCTION METHOD INSTEAD OF OUTCOME. THEY DREW ATTENTION TO CONTINUED AMBIGUITIES IN EASTERN CLAIMS TO HAVE MOVED IN THE FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL TOWARDS THE WESTERN POSITION ON PHASING

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AND CONTRASTED THE INEQUITY AND IMPRACTICAL NATURE OF THE

EASTERN POSITION ON THE REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS WITH THE MORE PRACTICAL WESTERN APPROACH.

3. CZECHOSLOVAK REP OPENED THE SESSION WITH AN ATTACK ON THE UNDERLYING PREMISES OF THE WESTERN REDUCTION APPROACH. HE CLAIMED THAT THE PRESENT EAST-WEST RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES, INCLUDING THE FORCE RELATIONSHIP IN THE REDUCTION AREA, WAS A NECESSARY BASIS FOR DETENTE, AND FOR THE VIENNA TALKS THEMSELVES. HENCE, IT MUST BE PRESERVED THROUGH EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS OF ALL TYPES OF FORCES OF ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS INCLUDING AIR FORCES AND NUCLEAR COMPONENTS.

4. UK REP CRITICIZED EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH AS FOCUSING ON METHOD, WITH RESULT THAT EASTERN NUMERICAL ADVANTAGES WOULD BE CONTRACTUALIZED. THIS APPROACH ALSO DISREGARDED BOTH GEOGRAPHY AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE SITUATION BEFORE AND AFTER AN AGREEMENT. HE SAID THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF THE WESTERN REDUCTION APPROACH WAS NOT INSISTENCE ON ASYMMETRY OF REDUCTIONS AS SUCH, BUT TO ARRIVE AT A SPECIFIC OUTCOME, APPROXIMATE PARITY IN GROUND FORCES. THIS OUTCOME WAS EQUITABLE IN ITSELF. THE FACT THAT THE EAST WOULD REDUCE MORE MEN THAN THE WEST AND WOULD ALSO REDUCE SOVIET TANKS DID NOT MEAN THAT THE PACKAGE OF REDUCTIONS AND LIMITATIONS THE WEST PROPOSED FOR THE EAST WOULD BE INEQUITABLE. THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PACKAGE OF REDUCTIONS AND LIMITATIONS WHICH THE WEST WAS OFFERING TO ASSUME FOR ITSELF WAS AT LEAST EQUAL TO THE MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OBLIGATIONS THE WEST WAS ASKING THE EAST TO ASSUME. FOR THESE REASONS, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WESTERN REDUCTION APPROACH WOULD NOT EFFECT THE OVERALL RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES IN THE AREA TO THE DETRIMENT OF EASTERN SECURITY.

5. POLISH REP ATTACKED THE WESTERN POSITION ON REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS AS AN INEFFECTIVE WAY OF REDUCING THE PRESENT HIGH CONCENTRATION OF ARMAMENTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE. HE CLAIMED THAT NATO COUNTRIES WERE INCREASING THEIR HOLDINGS OF AIRCRAFT, TANKS, ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS, SELF-PROPELLED ARTILLERY, AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS AND CLAIMED THAT THESE INCREASES WERE ONE REASON WHY THE WEST REFUSED TO ACCEPT ARMAMENT REDUCTIONS OR LIMITATIONS IN THE VIENNA TALKS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE WEST WAS MAKING A ONE-SIDED DEMAND TO

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REDUCE AN ENTIRE SOVIET TANK ARMY WITH ALL ITS ARMAMENTS AND TO LIMIT THE RESIDUAL LEVEL OF THESE ARMAMENTS IN SOVIET FORCES. RESPONDING TO EARLIER WESTERN CRITICISMS THAT THE EASTERN APPROACH TO REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS WOULD BE IMPRACTICALLY COMPLEX, POLISH REP SAID, THAT, IF THE WEST COULD COMPARE REDUCTION OF NUCLEARS WITH REDUCTION OF TANKS, WHAT WAS SO DIFFICULT ABOUT AGREEMENT TO ACROSS-THE-BOARD REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS OF SIMILAR TYPES ON EACH SIDE?

6. BELGIAN REP CRITICIZED THE PHASING ASPECT OF THE EASTERN FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL. HE SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH EASTERN EXPLANATIONS WERE CONFLICTING AND AMBIGUOUS, THE FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL APPARENTLY ENVISAGED THAT DIRECT PARTICIPANTS OTHER THAN THE SOVIET UNION AND US WOULD COMMIT THEMSELVES TO MAKE REDUCTIONS BY THE EQUAL PERCENTAGE METHOD WITH NATIONAL CEILINGS, TO MAKE REDUCTIONS BY UNITS, AND TO REDUCE THEIR ARMAMENTS, COMMITMENTS WHICH WOULD INVOLVE ACCEPTANCE OF THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE EASTERN REDUCTION APPROACH. UNDER SUCH AN APPROACH, THE ONLY ISSUES LEFT FOR A SECOND PHASE OF NEGOTIATION WOULD BE TO DESIGNATE THE SPECIFIC UNITS TO BE REDUCED AND TO SPECIFY WHICH PARTICULAR ARMAMENTS SHOULD BE REDUCED.

7. TARASOV ATTACKED THE WESTERN CONCEPT OF PHASING AS PROVIDING NO GUARANTEE OF REDUCTIONS BY NON-US WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME REQUIRING THE EAST TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE WESTERN REDUCTION PROGRAM, INCLUDING (A) ASYMMETRICAL OVERALL REDUCTION OF MAN-POWER; (B) REDUCTION OF SOVIET FORCES IN UNITS WHILE THE US WOULD WITHDRAW AS INDIVIDUALS; (C) ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CEILINGS FOR THE SOVIET UNION AND US, WHILE THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS WOULD BE UNDER A COLLECTIVE CEILING WHICH WOULD EVEN PERMIT THEM TO INCREASE THEIR FORCES UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, AND (D) THE SOVIETS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO REDUCE NOT ONLY TANKS, BUT ALL OF THE ARMAMENTS OF A SOVIET TANK ARMY IN RETURN FOR A LIMITED PORTION OF US NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS.

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FROM US REP MBFR

8. US REP CRITICIZED THE EAST'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO ARMAMENTS REDUCTIONS. HE SAID IT WAS UNCLEAR HOW THE EAST WOULD ACTUALLY PROPOSE TO CARRY OUT REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS UNDER ITS FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL. BUT, IN ANY EVENT, THE COMPREHENSIVE EASTERN APPROACH TO ARMAMENT REDUCTIONS WOULD CONTRACTUALIZE THE EAST'S NUMERICAL ADVANTAGES IN MANY MAJOR ARMAMENTS IN THE AREA. THE WESTERN MIXED-PACKAGE APPROACH OFFERED A REALISTIC AND EQUITABLE BASIS FOR AGREEMENT WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, RECONCILED THE APPROACHES OF THE TWO SIDES AS REGARDS ARMAMENT REDUCTIONS.

9. POLISH REP STATED THAT THE WESTERN POSITION REQUIRED THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL ARMAMENTS OF A SOVIET TANK ARMY IN ADDITION TO SOVIET TANKS, AND ALSO THE IMPOSITION OF LIMITATIONS ON THE RESIDUAL LEVELS OF ALL OF THESE ARMAMENTS, WHILE THE ONLY ARMAMENT LIMITATIONS BEING OFFERED BY THE WEST COULD BE OFFSET BY NON-US DIRECT PARTICIPANTS. US REP, DRAWING ON CONTINGENCY TALKING POINTS APPROVED BY AD HOC GROUP, SAID THAT THE WESTERN POSITION WAS THAT, UNDER A FIRST AGREEMENT THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD WITHDRAW A TANK ARMY CONSISTING OF 5 DIVISIONS, INCLUDING 68,000 MEN

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AND 1700 TANKS, AND THAT WORKING OUT SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS EVEN UNDER A SELECTIVE APPROACH LIKE THE WESTERN ONE WOULD BE BETTER ADDRESSED AT A LATER STAGE OF THE TALKS BECAUSE THIS WAS HIGHLY COMPLEX AND TECHNICAL TASK. IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER QUESTIONS BY EASTERN REPS AS TO WHETHER THE WEST ENVISAGED REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS OF SOVIET TANK ARMY OTHER THAN MAIN BATTLE TANKS, US REP SAID HE COULD NOT ADD ANYTHING TO THIS STATEMENT. END SUMMARY.

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